

WE CLAIM:

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or right is claimed are defined as follows:

1. An automatic reading system, comprising in combination:

 a means for detecting speech of a user who is reading out loud;

 a means for evaluating the user's reading skill; and

 a means for making reading recommendations.
2. The system of Claim 1, further comprising means for adjusting a level profile of a book being read.
3. The system of Claim 2, wherein the book is an electronic book.
4. The system of Claim 1, further comprising means for providing feedback on the user.
5. The system of Claim 4, wherein the feedback is a progress report.
6. The system of Claim 4, wherein the feedback is a comparison with peers.

7. The system of Claim 1, further comprising means for providing marketing data.
8. An automatic reading system, comprising in combination:
 a speech recognition system operable to provide an estimate of speech;
 an evaluation device operable to convert the estimate of speech into an item score;
 and
5 a recommendation device operable to use the item score to provide a reading
 recommendation.
9. The system of Claim 8, wherein the speech recognition system estimates
 linguistic content of the speech.
10. The system of Claim 8, wherein the estimate of speech is a sequence of words in a
 machine recognizable format.
11. The system of Claim 10, wherein the machine recognizable format is ASCII.
12. The system of Claim 8, wherein the evaluation device includes a response
 database.
13. The system of Claim 12, wherein the response database includes a correct
 response.

14. The system of Claim 13, wherein the correct response is a sample provided by sample speakers that represents a correct reading of text.

15. The system of Claim 13, wherein the correct response is provided only by the text.

16. The system of Claim 8, wherein the item score is calculated using Item Response Theory.

17. The system of Claim 8, wherein the item score is a number of differences between speech and a correct response.

17. The system of Claim 8, wherein the recommendation device is operable to use the item score to adjust a level profile of an electronic book.

19. The system of Claim 8, wherein the recommendation device is operable to provide feedback to a user.

20. The system of Claim 8, wherein the recommendation device is operable to provide marketing data.

21. The system of Claim 8, wherein the recommendation device accesses at least one database.
22. The system of Claim 21, wherein the at least one database includes a book database.
23. The system of Claim 22, wherein the book database contains several versions of a book.
24. The system of Claim 23, wherein the several versions of the book include versions of the book with different level profiles.
25. The system of Claim 22, wherein the book database contains a memory pointer capable of tracking in several versions of a book where a user is reading.
26. The system of Claim 25, wherein the several versions of the book contain linkage points.
27. The system of Claim 26, wherein the recommendation device uses the linkage points to switch between the several versions of the book.
28. The system of Claim 21, wherein the at least one database includes a user

database.

29. The system of Claim 28, wherein the user database includes data selected from the group consisting of user identification, history of evaluations, history of books read, user preferences, and responses to questions.

30. An automatic reading system, comprising in combination:

 a speech recognition system operable to provide an estimate of linguistic content of speech, and wherein the estimate is a sequence of words in a machine recognizable format;

5 an evaluation device operable to convert the estimate of the linguistic content of speech into an item score, wherein the item score is calculated using Item Response Theory, and wherein the item score is a number of differences between speech and a correct response; and

10 a recommendation device operable to use the item score to provide a reading recommendation, wherein the recommendation device accesses a book database containing several versions of a book, and wherein the recommendation device accesses a user database.

31. The system of Claim 30, wherein the recommendation device is operable to use the item score to adjust a level profile of an electronic book.

32. The system of Claim 30, wherein the recommendation device is operable to provide feedback to a user.

33. The system of Claim 30, wherein the recommendation device is operable to provide marketing data.

34. A method of providing an automatic reading system, comprising in combination:
reading text into a speech detector;
estimating linguistic content of speech;
5 converting an estimate into an item score; and
providing a reading recommendation.

35. The method of Claim 34, further comprising adjusting a level profile of an electronic book.

36. The method of Claim 34, further comprising providing feedback to a user.

37. The method of Claim 34, further comprising providing marketing data.

38. The method of Claim 34, wherein the speech detector converts speech into electrical signals.

39. The method of Claim 38, wherein a speech recognition system uses the electrical signals to estimate the linguistic content of speech.

40. The method of Claim 34, wherein the item score is calculated using Item Response Theory.

41. The method of Claim 34, wherein the item score is a number of differences between speech and a correct response.

42. An automatic reading system, comprising in combination:
 a client device including a display and a speech detector; and
 a server device operable to detect speech from a user reading from a book,
 wherein the sever device evaluates the speech, and wherein the server device provides
5 reading recommendations to the user.

43. The system of Claim 42, wherein the display is a device selected from the group consisting of a wireless handheld device, a personal digital assistant, a monitor, a personal computer, a digital data reader, an electronic book, and a document.

44. The system of Claim 42, wherein the speech detector is a device selected from the group consisting of a telephone, a mobile telephone, a microphone, and a voice transducer.

45. The system of Claim 42, wherein the client device communicates with the server device using a network.
46. The system of Claim 45, wherein the network is a public switched telephone network.
47. The system of Claim 45, wherein the network is a packet-switched network.
48. The system of Claim 42, wherein the server device adjusts a level profile of an electronic book.
49. The system of Claim 42, wherein the server device provides feedback to the user.
50. The system of Claim 42, wherein the server device provides marketing data.